

Welcome to Turning Conscience Into Action, the Earth Charter podcast. Join Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter International Executive Director, in her fascinating conversations with great thinkers, scholars and activists from around the world who are working in the fields of sustainability, ethics, education and social transformation. Our purpose is to generate new insights on how to face current global challenges and inspire informed action.

So today we are welcoming two outstanding ladies from South Africa, Mamphela Ramphele and Nolita Mvunelo.

I'm so happy to welcome you and thank you so much for joining our Earth Charter podcast. Thank you very much. Thank you so much. It's wonderful to be here and to have the powerhouse of three women talking about important things in life. Thank you so much, Mamphela and Nolita. So let me introduce the two of you to our audience. Mamphela is co-president of the Club of Rome. She's an activist. Interesting. She's a medical doctor, an academic, a businesswoman, political thinker. And interesting for me, she was one of the founders of the Black Consciousness Movement and is the author of several books and publications on social economic issues in South Africa, including a book entitled A Passion for Freedom.

Thank you so much, Mamphela. Looking forward to learn more from you in this conversation. Thank you, Mirian.

And Nolita is program manager at the Club of Rome. She's working on something that I'm very curious to learn more called the emerging new civilization and also a whole effort on youth leadership and intergenerational dialogue. And I'm very curious also to learn more from you, Nolita. Thank you. Thank you for having us. Now let's start with a conversation around the Black Consciousness Movement.

I know it was in the 60s and I'm very honored to have Mamphela here because she was part of a group of young people who initiated that movement in those days. And for those of you who don't know from our audience, it was a resistant movement during the apartheid era that restored the dignity of the Black South Africans. So Mamphela, in brief, what was that movement and what do you think influenced that movement and its main legacy over to Mamphela? The Black Consciousness Movement was the encapsulation of the rising to consciousness of a generation in the late 60s that had grown up in a country where it was accepted that people like me were called non-whites, non-Europeans, and were treated as fourth class citizens.

We were denied the basic human rights. We were denied the privileges and access to opportunities in the beautiful, wealthy South Africa, simply because we were regarded as inferior to those who had captured our country through colonial conquest and had then designed the system of oppression on the basis of the color of one's skin. So we as young Black students decided to ask ourselves the question, how is it possible that a majority of people who were 90% of the population could be held captive by 10% of the population? The answer became very clear to the extent that we accepted being identified as a negative of the very people who were dominating us. There was no chance of being free. So I

remember that weekend when we made that self-definition journey, we decided we are not none anybody.

We are as valued creatures of the Creator as anybody else. We are Black and we are proud. We decided that we are going to let the principle of Natal University know. We do not belong to the so-called non-European section of the university.

We belong to a Black section of the university and the whole university must change its attitude. So we were self-liberated by that awareness of the power we had to name ourselves and that made us unstoppable as young people challenging every traditional view of what it means to be human. Thank you so much. So self-liberating makes me think about the so many things we need to self-liberate our minds in our current generation. So, Nolita, when you look at this history, so Mampela was there in the 60s challenging the status quo. How do you look back at that history?

You were not there and how did you learn about that history and what is that? How do you see the legacy of those times? I think the first thing I think is, wow, I did not learn enough at school.

As we were saying before we started recording, the version that you learn about or you're taught at least in the South African public school system is completely different from when you're in the position of privilege that I'm in to learn about the Black consciousness movement from the source of the fountain itself. When it comes to the concept of self-liberation and what it means to this current generation, I think that there is much to learn about not wanting to define yourself as someone who is a contradiction to something else or someone who identifies themselves as someone who has to overcome something, but to live in an intrinsic value of yourself as a person and of yourself as a generation. For us, the struggle is not too different from the struggle that Dr.

Mpela is speaking about in that it is one of self-definition. When you are living in an environment of not only national but global crises, you find that a lot of people are working to define you and as an African, it tends to be you're someone who has to be helped, you're someone who has to be taught, you're someone who has to be civilized, you're someone who has to, a lot has to be done to you and very few people are asking you who you are and that is at its source what is basically the struggle of this, of I guess my generation but future generations is who will we become and who do we want to be and trying to then silence out all of that noise and really figure out what is that uniqueness that we're really pushing and pursuing. Yeah. Well thank you.

So looking at ourselves and identifying who we are is of major importance. Thank you so much, Nolita. I'm actually very surprised because I come from Latin America and I understand that in Latin America we don't learn much about African history and South African history. My surprise here is that even within South Africa history that is taught in schools don't really open and go in depth into that history. So that's really something very important for us because our worldviews, so how do we nurture our worldviews is based on what we receive, the information we get from our families, from our upbringing, our schooling, etc. So the worldviews that we are nurturing can be quite distorted. That's

actually something that we should always ask ourselves, the assumptions that we have in our minds.

So Mamphela, you have published several books, I'm in awe, but in one of your latest books that's called *Dreams, Betrayal and Hope*, you make an analysis of the state of the nation in South Africa. So can you share with us some of the key ideas you are articulating this book? The betrayal of the dream that my generation was inspired by, a dream of a South Africa which will be not only democratic but socially just, where everyone's dignity would be restored and promoted, where everyone will have access to basic needs. That dream was betrayed. It was betrayed by the leaders of the African National Congress. Despite what Mandela said to all and all, when he came out of jail he was treated as the kind of Moses who came to liberate South Africa.

No, he said we were liberated by the young people who challenged the system that had sent us to jail. And they went further than us, he said, in not accepting as they had done as a generation the inevitability of being dominated by Europeans. And so that dream was betrayed by the nature of the political supplement.

When you are oppressed, you are not just oppressed politically which is what happened in 1994, we had a political settlement which allowed and freed everybody, another constitution, to be able to vote, to be free to travel, to speak, all of the political rights. What? The socio-economic transformation that was absolutely needed and continues to be needed today to move us away from four, five hundred years of colonial conquest and the extraction of wealth from our country by the ancestors of today's very tiny minority of white people who have more wealth than the combined majority of South Africa. 76% of South Africa's people remain poor and destitute.

That is why when you fly into any city in South Africa, you can tell where black people live and where the rest of us who because of our education and having had the opportunities that we had, we are able to live and enjoy the beauty of Table Mountain and so on.

And so when I speak about betrayer of the dream of the South Africa that so many of my generation sacrificed their lives for, yesterday we're celebrating another milestone of the death of Steve Biko on the 12th of September 1977 because he became seen as a threat to continued domination of a minority of a majority. And so what I expressed in *Dreams, Betrayal and Hope* was the sense that I felt South Africa's people have lost that power to define themselves and that includes defining yourself as a woman. South Africa is the highest gender-based violence rate in the world and it's brutal.

Women are killed, they are burned, their children are raped and burned by partners, which is an expression also of the unfinished business of liberation because liberation is not just from racism, it should also be from sexism, from poverty, from all of the isms that make us prisoners. And so I believe, which is why the hope, I really believe that if we who started the Black Contrast and Awareness movement, we're only 15, we didn't have social media, we didn't have money to fly around the country, we used the power of word of mouth, traveling, making sure that we not only talk being black and proud, we live being black and proud.

The inner liberation has to give rise to the outer liberation and the structural transformation that we were known as a doctor, you are a different doctor from one who is mentally imprisoned. As a woman, when you walk in, yes, a chauvinist would know that this is not to be triumphant with. So that's what I believe, we can still recapture by, which is the reason why my soul purpose now at 75 is to support the no-letters of this day, so they know that they have much more than we had when we founded the Black Contrast. She is a chemical engineer, my goodness, I didn't even know that there was a tradition or a profession called engineer. The sky is the limit for them.

All they need to do is to know that it is their generation now that must complete the process of liberation by making sure they are fully self-liberated.

Very interesting. So in the fight for democracy, you realize in that process that was not just about political democracy, that it required ensuring social and economic justice. Thank you for putting together this wonderful book that I would recommend everybody to read it, to expand their mind and consciousness around these issues, not only in South Africa, but in many countries of course around the world. Nolita, any thoughts on this?

Hello, glad briefly. As to the doctor's last point, what are the dreams and the hopes then of what is now South Africa's probably most educated generation, especially facing some of the challenges of also a very high unemployment rate, etc., etc., is that the tools are there. The education is there, people are incredibly capable, and even those who didn't go through a formal education, there is a wealth of potential. I guess in a Western framing of how do you then solve these types of problems? We speak of pain points and human-centered design, etc., but what is at its core is about using this tension and criticality as an opportunity for hope, and using that education and your dreams as a center for how you make the types of decisions that you make.

Because that's where the opportunity really is now, is that when you have education, but you have dreams that are centered around wanting to build a community, wanting to build a self, wanting to build a family that has a certain sense of values, then the types of decisions you make are completely different from the decisions that you would make in a different type of framing.

Because then the ambition is not about only personal wealth, it is not about I have to increase personal capital gain, etc., etc., which is my one criticism of the, like my parents' generation, is they let themselves be silenced by a narrative of you were liberated by someone else, is that then the priority shifts to I have a family, I have to take care of my family, which will be true and is true for many of my peers, but the dream has to expand beyond that, because it is not only then about personal outcomes, I think it is clearer for us, because of education, because of social media, that it is then a societal ambition, and if we don't do it, then no one else will.

We are sitting with that type of responsibility, but again, it's more than responsibility, we're sitting with that opportunity to really then do something different. Responsibility and taking the opportunity. Thank you, Nolita. So one of these days I was going through the club of Rome website, digging into it, and I found this very valuable paper that I didn't know of, that was developed by the African chapter of the club of Rome. It's a paper

called Towards New Narratives of Hope for Fostering Transformative African Futures. I think that everybody should read this or get to know about this, take a glance. So, Ken, any of you share with us, what are the key ideas that are articulated there, and what's the purpose of that paper, and how we have been using that within the African context?

The key is I became the coach president of the club of Rome in 2018. I became a member much earlier, and it was clear to me that this club of Rome has no concept of a world broader than Europe. It was a club of old, predominantly old European men, and old American men and women, and the few Africans who were there had no voice really, and the narrative and the agendas were set in Europe and America. And I had been persuaded to become a co-president at it wasn't of my choosing, but once you ask me to do something, I have a responsibility as Noluta said. And so, my first responsibility was to make sure that the African voice makes his presence felt, and it couldn't be making his presence felt by complaining, by bringing new narratives.

And those narratives had to be narratives of hope, but the narratives were also about changing this story, that a story that said what is of value is what comes from so-called western civilization, from the Enlightenment. As someone said, it was neither enlightened nor civilized. Enlightened civilization in Europe was built on slavery, colonial conquest, that cannot pass master as civilization. And so, we turned all of that around and talked about ancient African wisdom, because remember, Africa is the mother continent, not only in terms of the evolution of humanity, but also evolution of human civilization.

You as Brazilians are more African in a lot of ways than many others in the rest of the world, because you were taken there as slaves, many of you, and then what happened, what you look like, is a product of the engagements between Africans and other people. But that ancient African civilization was built on one major core belief, which is to be human, is to be interconnected, and interdependent with others, within the web of life. You are also connected to animals, to plants, to the elements, and nature is not out there, we are part of it. And so, those are the narratives we brought back. We brought back, and I say back because all human beings have to go back to relearning what it means to be human. As one Australian Aborigine leader said, all people have to become indigenous again.

We must all learn the Ubuntu principles, because those are the principles on which true human rights and human responsibilities and engagement can be built. And a true ecological civilization came out of this understanding by Africans that we are connected. Everything is connected with everything else. Love this, everything is connected to everything else, and they need to nurture this narrative of interconnectedness and interdependence. So African liberation and this new narrative that you have written in this book, Noluta, would you share with us what does African liberation mean to you, and how do you think this should be nurtured? I suppose this paper that was put together by the African chapter of the Club of Rome is a way to also express that. So, over to you, Noluta.

So African liberation for me means the freedom to chart a different path. So to your question on how to nurture that, I'm not sure if you've seen that human development index versus ecological footprint graph that sort of shows that there are actually no nations that exist in that sustainable development portion, which means human development over 0.8

and sustainable development, meaning requiring only the ecological footprint of one earth to make that possible for all of humanity, etc. There are some that are really close, Indonesia, etc, etc. But as you can tell, the examples are Indonesia, I'm struggling to recall the other few, but they're not the examples that we use to say developed, such as your Scandinavian countries, your Switzerland, etc, etc.

So part of that whole nurturing that is recognizing that concept of no one has arrived, we're all on our way, at least looking at today's present day format. Either some of us need to go a little bit closer to the human development part without the ecological footprint, and some of us have to improve on the ecological footprint part. Very few of us are really close to that. So part of nurturing it is really asking those questions and not accepting the narratives that we are hearing from everywhere else, right?

Because that is what creates an appetite for wanting to mimic certain economic models, as if they're the right ones, even though we know that as you can tell, there's a cognitive dissonance between what we're all collectively working towards in terms of developmental frameworks, and what is actually possible, etc, etc. But I'll take a step back again on my definition of African liberation. As I said, it's about then the freedom to chart a different part, the freedom to really then explore how we get to that point.

As Dr. Ampélie said, there's much that we already know from civilization's past, and much that we need to learn what we had known previously and how to embody that. It is about the freedom to reach our fullest potential and the capacity to actualize this vibrant, beautiful, and connected people in society that we desire to be. So for me, African liberation means a future where three generations from now, young people are not going to define themselves by what they've had to overcome, but they're going to define themselves by how much more they need to learn and what they're headed towards.

And maybe that way, we're going to have the space of curiosity and possibility that enough people can engage in that process of just slowly inching towards that window of what it means to be free, to make choices, while respecting human dignity, respecting life dignity, and having the capacity to learn even more. Thank you, Nolita. Mamp'hela, what for you? What is African liberation? What does that mean? And how could that be nurtured? Can you build on that from what we just heard from Nolita? That's the beauty of intergenerational conversations, because I want to comment it from a generational perspective that we have had so-called decolonial movements or struggles in Africa. Africa has yet to be liberated by its own people, because no one comes to liberate you.

Liberation, by definition, is a product of inner work, where you liberate yourself in the first place to be able to reimagine the world you want to live in. Most colonial Africa remains just that, an imitation of the departed colonial masters, and the fact that we continue to talk about decolonial narratives. What is that? Why should we be defined by something that took away our dignity? We have to have a process of reimagining Africa as the mother continent, the mother of civilization, and expressing that reimagining Africa in how we govern, not the West, what's Westminster type of governance. Africa is going through these continual coups and conflicts, because African philosophy, with its focus on interconnectedness and interrelationships, is about people coming together.

In traditional African discourse, you sit in a circle. Everybody is equal to everybody else. The king, the chief, or whatever speaks last, because God gave us two years and one month. So we have to listen twice as much as we speak. Now that doesn't happen in Parliament, where everybody comes with pre-prepared speeches, they're not listening. They're there to carry out what their masters in the political parties say. So we in Africa have to reimagine governance away from political parties, which are about me, myself, and I. Second, we need to have the kind of governance that is led by multiple generations, where my generation receives into the background as Nolita and her peers move forward, because they have more energy, more creativity, and they can deal with 21st century problems.

And finally, Africa has to be reimaged in terms of its economic models and its social development models. It cannot be that money drives us, foreign currency drives us. No, our development has to be measured by how much well-being for all we are able to handle, how light our footprint is on Mother Earth, and how in the greater scheme of things, we make sure that the development process does not damage the ecological system. That is the source of life. It seems that it seems not for sure. We are falling short of systemic transformation in all regions of the world, be it in Latin America, Northeast, South. So what do you think are the roadblocks and drivers to address this fact that we are falling short of systemic transformation specifically from your perspective within the African region?

I believe we are falling short because we are captured by the current narrative that is driven by the dominance of Western civilization, which as I defined, is not a civilization that will pass the test of what it means to be human. It is a civilization based on exploitation of the rest of us. No is civilization in Russia any better, or in China particularly now. Ancient China was different from the communist so-called dominated China. And so all of us as humanity need to reimagine, as that Indigenous leader said in Australia, we all need to become Indigenous again. We all need to do the inner work of freeing ourselves from this consumer-driven development model. There's a big is better kind of development model, and this model that depends on how much you can compete against the rest.

And so I think that's why in the Club of Rome we are relying on no-liter generation. They must liberate themselves to be able to liberate Africa, to be able to liberate Latin America, China, everywhere where young people are. Their job is to reimagine and liberate their regions and ultimately the Club.

Thank you, Mamphela. Nolita, you're working on with a lot of things. We would like to learn more. I understand that within the context of the Club of Rome, you are leading the African youth liberating the future. We'd like to learn more from you, what you have learned from that, and also what you have been working on within the sphere of youth leadership and intergenerational dialogues within that. And of course, I believe that you have a clear idea of how you envision the role of youth and intergenerational dialogue in helping all of us to move ahead or to trigger this necessary societal change that we need.

Yeah, on the point of intergenerational collaboration, I believe that it is sort of one of the best ways to consolidate all that is good while we mobilize the energy towards defining something new, but also as the doctor said, learning how to be human again, learning

what we already know. And I will give an example. The best example is through research and innovation, because it is a commonly held belief that young people's ability to create new opportunities through entrepreneurship have like, I don't know, a surprisingly high ability to create new opportunities through entrepreneurship. However, research has highlighted that the average age of a successful founder is actually 35 to 45. So what does that mean? One, that assumption is not fundamentally correct, right?

Being under 30 does not mean you're more creative than other people, because if it did, it also has a sinister implication that for some reason, after 30, it starts declining, which is not true, right? We know that the more you know your ability to innovate kind of increases over time. But I think what also it means is that I assume there's something about being 35 to 45 where you're sitting at like a good amount of experience to know which steps to take creatively, while also sort of still being in a space where you have enough energy to take some of the risks that are necessary and the creativity, etc.

But then that's where intergenerational collaboration comes in, because if you do build these bridges, then that relationship, that communal process between a younger person and a senior more experienced person sort of mimics that whole, you know, you're sitting in a golden zone area, etc. Because you then have increased the amount of wisdom and learning that is available to collaborate with, while you've also got like the infinite, not infinite, because you know, energy is finite, but you know, the energy and the risk taking and, you know, the fun and the creativity of being someone in your early 20s or younger, etc. And that is where some of that magic is. But also because of where we are as a human community, we're facing challenges that are unprecedented.

So there is an element of relationships tend to transform us as people.

And the more we foster these types of relationships, the better we are able to catalyze the types of transitions or revolutions that are necessary in different spheres. Could we are using then the fullness of our human potential, and not just, you know, leaving it kind of to chance about who's going to succeed or who's not, because that still leaves it an incredibly competitive space, right? The collaboration is that opportunity for us to really sit down and frame problems in a way that is understanding and creative, etc. But also our opportunity to then break through, where the sum of the parts is greater than, you know, is greater as a whole, is part of, you know, that opportunity.

Only in the work on African youth liberating the future, the work then involves a lot of awareness building, first of all, as we said at the start of the conversation, some of those histories are not taught. So half of it is to say, hey, do you notice that there's a gap between what everyone is telling you, and what is really happening? And what does that mean?

You know, what are you going to do about it? And if I were to share for 10 seconds a story about meeting Dr. O'Pillard for the first time, she said, that's an interesting question. What are you going to do about it? You need to raise the level of your ambition. So there's an element of creating that appetite amongst our peers and asking each other those questions. Like, hey, do you notice that in the news it says this, but this is your experience? What does that mean? And what should we do about it? That's awareness raising. And then then creating those opportunities for collaboration and community building across

different sectors, because complexity requires fluidity, but also sometimes a level of expertise. And again, most educated generation so far in South Africa. So a lot of people know a lot of things.

It's just about where do we then rest our hopes and our dreams into. And then the last one is then an ambition to sort of create concrete experiments of where these transitions can be. There are amazing young politicians that we speak to about where do you think the opportunity is. There are amazing activists, young business leaders that we speak to about what are the opportunities where can we experiment concretely. And in summary, that is the work we're doing right now in terms of leadership and intergenerational dialogues, specifically also in the African context. Thank you. Yeah, intergenerational dialogue and collaboration certainly expand our capacity to see, to understand and implement things.

We hear from the first shadow international we have been also for the past two decades, really paying attention to the importance of engaging, empowering young people and nurturing and intergenerational collaboration. So I fully agree with you. So we are coming to the last portion of our conversation today. And I would like to turn to ecological civilization. And it's a number of people are talking about that. The importance of us to foster understanding and moving towards an ecological civilization. So I would like to start by asking one Pella, for you, what is an ecological civilization? How will you define that? I would define an ecological civilization as a civilization in which we as human beings have come into awareness, very heightened consciousness of what it means to be human.

And how being human connects us with all of life. And therefore, for us to tread ever so likely, instead of the narrative of Western civilization where we are to dominate, even particularly Christian conservatives about how we were given the by who the creator mother made the work the earth available to everyone. So even is ecological civilization is about awareness that we are part of a whole to the responsibility to tread ever so likely. And third, the care and love and compassion to all of life. And finally, to make sure that you are a contributor to greater well being within a context of greater equity and ensuring that we leave this mother earth in a situation in a condition in which our offspring and their offspring can live in harmony and prosperity. Yeah, thank you.

Consciousness and awareness of what it means to be a human. Nolita, for you, what is an ecological civilization?

I understand global and global climate and social challenges to sort of be indicative of our relationship with nature, but also our relationship with one another. And climate change is, as I understand at first, like sort of the first principle, a sign of how we understand our entitlement and responsibility to the earth and to one another. So an ecological civilization is one that has understood that balance between, you know, that entitlement, the responsibility, the opportunity and continues to pursue learning based on the environment that we're in at the time. So it's a civilization that is learning and always in flux, but also holds that space of this is what we need. This is what we're responsible for. This is what we need to care for.

Nolita, what do you think are the key elements or the essential ingredients to help us move towards an ecological civilization?

Social equity, human development and being in harmony with the biosphere. So on social equity, I see that as the core of breaking from an exploitative model of people and nature and moving from that towards collaboration. If we do not understand this, then we probably will struggle really to understand what it means to sort of take care of nature, because we've already failed to understand what it means to care for each other. Human development then speaks to our ability to learn and strive for better for different, our ability to understand ourselves and our ability to center human dignity and people's ability to open the space of possibilities and freedom for themselves. So it's centered on autonomy, on personal freedom as a core element of what is required for society.

Without that, then all parts kind of lead to fascism. So that's unhelpful. And then I think the harmony with the biosphere part is a little bit self-explanatory.

So it's in my understanding of the ingredients are very much about we really need to be better to one another. And once we've understand that, I think we will understand how to be better to other species. So it's like making a cake. We're looking at the key ingredients for us to put in this cake of moving towards an ecological civilization. Montpeler, what would be the essential ingredients that you think are necessary for this ecological civilization? It turns in my view on our understanding of love as expressing the inner person in you and nurturing that person, caring for that person. So that, as they say, you can't give from nothing. You can then be a compassionate person, a person who proceeds with a clear purpose of promoting fairness, equity, justice, not just within our species, but all.

Because if we shortchange the rest of this ecological system, it comes back to haunt us as it is now. Mother Earth will always come back to take back its own and reestablish balance. And sometimes it is very harsh language that Mother Earth speaks when we don't listen, when we don't learn as

Nolita urges us to be. The ecological civilization is about learning. We don't teach ecology in our schools. We don't teach ecology in our homes. We, you know, kids can play around with trees, chopping them on, we don't say to them, you are chopping off your own finger. Because this is an understanding of interconnectedness. You can't have an end if you don't want to be hurt. Yeah, we are many of us in the world, populations ecologically illiterate. So how would we expect to achieve an ecological civilization? So it's a key question for us.

So is there, do you think there is any nexus between the ideas you have articulated in the book, passion for freedom, in this idea of ecological civilization that's for you, Montpela, and for you Nolita, do you see any nexus between the work you have been doing, emerging new civilization and the vision of ecological civilization. So first Montpela, nexus between the passion for freedom, in this idea of ecological civilization. Freedom expressed in my book, captures that which moved us from being named by others to name ourselves. But having been self named, we then have to look at freedom

as not just freedom of the human race, but freedom to be part of the cycle of life as a contributor and enricher and in turn being enriched by it.

There is no other definition of freedom other than one which makes us better at being human and being a species that has value to what mother earth is given so generously. Nolita? So the emerging new civilizations initiative, part of it is based off a belief or a bet or an acknowledgement that many of the seeds of the type of systemic transformation we're speaking of, they exist. And it's emerging new civilizations because of the fact that this these men they manifest in different ways in different places, how it manifests in Brazil versus how it manifests in Cape Town is very different. And when I speak about these seeds of transformation, I'm speaking of communities, individuals that have succeeded in making transitions or transformations that are amazing, probably improbable, improbable.

And without much support from what is the current incumbent system, because that is the nature of inequality is that you have large parts of the population living outside of what we call, you know, the system and having to make do with what they have. And many people have done amazing things. So then the question becomes, what can we learn from that? Because in there, there are opportunities for us to really create something new. When we speak of an ecological civilization, as the doctor said, there is an element of we need to learn from the past, because there are many things that we knew beforehand. But because the present is so different, what is it can we learn from people who have shown what this transformation can look like in the sphere, where they are right now?

And can we pull that together into and catalyze a transition into something that we could have not otherwise imagined? That is the core of what the racial civilization is working to do.

Great. So as we are in this process of trying to define a vision of ecological civilization and build a narrative around and towards that, Manpella, do you think there is a can serve as an instrument or ethical foundation or basis of envisioning this or building this narrative around ecological civilization and how? You know, our struck because I decided to reread the Earth Charter. It is a beautifully crafted chart. It covers the waterfront. So no one can say, oh, I didn't think about that because they didn't mention it. Excuse me. It really is a rich document.

It enables just what Nolita was talking about, wherever you are, you can live the Earth Charter. In the same way that we lived it without knowing about the Earth Charter. And I wish the United Nations would embrace the spirit of the Earth Charter, which is a holistic spirit, not 17 SDGs, but broad framing about what it means to be human for us to be called civilized within a healthy planet where equity rates. Nolita, I'll go to you on that question and I would add one more. Should we envision ecological civilization in similar or plural and why?

On the part of Earth Charter as a basis of ethical foundation, I'm going to put on my program manager hat and say I see an opportunity for three things and I assume that this is probably what is already happening is I see the Earth Charter as an amazing basis of creating awareness or like I said earlier, creating an appetite as Dr. Opelé said, is with it,

there's a wide array of different elements that people can learn about and can explore and see as different opportunities for radical transformation.

There is also an element of being a space for innovation and collaboration to, I think I've used the word learn 20 times today, but to learn making new things and create opportunities where the sum of all the good things that everyone is doing can create something great, can create something unexpected and something new. And also then for concrete experiments as a growing portfolio of evidence for the human community. Because sometimes the thing with limiting beliefs is that you create this value system believing that you're not capable of doing something.

And what you need is to get a portfolio of evidence for yourself, for yourself as a community, as a civilization to say, oh, we've done this, there is an example of this, what can we learn from it? Not to scale, because I think that's part of the problem that we have now is to say, okay, same thing, but make it bigger. No, the point is not same thing, but make it bigger, but same thing, how do I learn from it to transition where I need to transition? That's what I think the opportunity is with the Earth Charter. And on plural versus single civilizations, as I mentioned earlier, I think it's about a plural civilizations. I think that creating a dynamic where you say it's a single civilization is that you create a civilizer, because then there has to be a winner.

There has to be one person who knows where the transit where we're going towards. And then it becomes their job to tell the rest of us what we need to do. And as an African, the word civilizer is something I am definitely allergic to, because I know what happens when people think that they can tell you what to do. It's about letting people to build their own home. And if the homes are the same, if the civilizations are the same, let it be a happy coincidence, and not something that had to be enforced on other people. Great. Well, ladies, you're certainly outstanding. I'm so honored.

And I have really, my heart is filled with gratitude and appreciation for this conversation we just had today. And I'm sure it will be of great value to our audience. And actually, in as we were chatting here, I just came to my mind that I was in first time I went to Cape Town, 1999, during the Parliament of the World Religions, and actually had the opportunity to see Mandela coming to the arena of good hope. Their shuttle was offered as a gift of service at that occasion. But we did have have a credible, rich conversation with a group of people from Africa around, still around the drafting of the shuttle. It happened in Cape Town. So just it was such a long time ago that I had forgotten that.

So I just wanted to share this with you because of course, brought great memories for me, the richness of that conversation. So we came to an end.

And I just want to express again, gratitude for both of you and wish you a continuous and flourishing energy to do the great work you are doing with the Club of Rome and specifically in your context in Africa. Thank you.

Thank you, Mirian. You hosted us so generously last December as the Club of Rome. We are indebted to you. And thank you for this beautiful interview.

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